

Minutes, Standing Committee on Rules, December 6, 2005

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:30 PM. Members present were Teri Banerjee, Joel Winett, Bernice Strom, Archie Lyon, Ed Kross, Michael Berardi and Gloria Geller. There was a motion and second to accept the minutes of November 7, 2005.

Joel Winett presented the article that he will submit to the Spring Town Meeting. The article concerns itself with reports from various departments, boards, committees and commissions that get reported to Town Meeting. The reports are initiated by:

1. Reports from departments, boards, commissions and committees.
2. Reports required by MGL's or town by-laws.
3. Reports requested by town officials
4. Resolutions at various Town Meetings that have not been addressed by the Board of Selectmen, Fin Com, etc.

At 8:00 PM the meeting was devoted to discussions with the heads of most of the standing committees of Town Meeting. Those present were, Wes Ritchie Chair of Education, Bob Berman acting for Planning and Zoning, Audrey Hall acting for Ways and Means, Christine Long chair of Public Works, David Hutchinson chair of Community Services. The discussions began with how we could help the mission of the standing committees to work more efficiently. We were concerned with the number of meetings they held per year, attendance at meetings, etc. As the discussion continued the role of the committees was discussed and how they decided what their role should be vis a vis: were they pro active, did they respond to warrant articles, did they work with town departments, were they watchdogs, etc.

The discussion continued on whether meetings should be concurrent, should they have minutes, should our committees have term limits. Joel's proposed article was discussed... some felt if we had to listen to so many reports sleep enhancement may occur on the floor of TM.

At the end of the discussion the consensus was that we enjoyed the meeting and learned about how committees work. Action items were suggested:

1. How do people get onto standing committees?
2. How often should we have joint meetings/
3. Should there be term limits for standing committees?
4. Outreach vs action on warrants.
5. Road map for the way a citizen initiates an article to be made available in BoS's office or Town Clerk's office.
6. Moderator appointed committees should meet as well to discuss similar issues.

The importance of ballot votes for the December 7th Town Meeting was discussed as a way to have accountability and check on late evening attendance.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Gloria Geller

